

The CATS at LAW

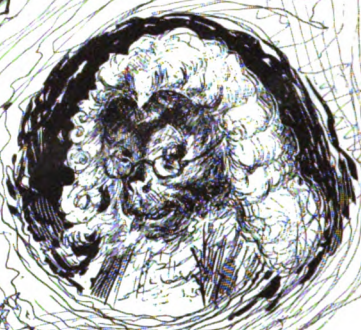
VERIFIED FROM
ÆSOP'S FABLES
BY MRS.
CLARA
D^OTY BATES.

OLD GREY sat by his fire;
He was somewhat dull and blue;
He stroked the whisker on his chin
And twisted his moustache too. —
They were trim when he begun,
But something must be done,
And he'd nothing else to do.

There suddenly came a knock:
Rat-tat, rat-tat — tat — tat!
He lazily winked his eyes, and called
Out sleepily: "Who is that?"
When the door flew open wide,
And with a hasty stride
In came a NEIGHBOR CAT.

"Good evening, COMRADE TOM,
— So you're abroad to-night?
I like a hearth when days grow chill
The embers are so bright.
Take off your overshoes,
And your coat, too, if you choose,
And sit in my firelight.

ILLUSTRATED BY
EDMUND C. GARRETT.





Said Tom, "I've little time
For luxuries like these;
But get your lantern, PUSSY GREY,
And hurry about it, please,
For I've found a door ajar,
And I think our chances are
Good for a biff of cheese."

"Ah, Tom," cried PUSSY GREY,
"I fear you're a wicked one!
But wait, I'll light my lantern quick
And put my ulster on!"
The twirl of a furry paw
Was all the firelight saw,
And the thieving friends were gone.

Not the noise of one footfall
Was made by their twice four,
As they sped along in silent stealth
And reached the dairy door.
It was open the merest crack,
And they pushed the hinges back,
And crept along the floor.

They found a huge round cheese,
And they carved a generous slice,
Whispering gleefully the while
"How very, very nice!
We'll take it between us — so!
And never a soul will know,
They'll think it was the mice."

But when they reached their den
They began to disagree,
As to which deserved the larger part,
And both growled angrily.
Said Tom, with greedy boast,
"I've a right to claim the most
For my discovery."

A MONKEY lived next door;
He heard the foolish jar,
He laughed at each new threat, then said:
"What simpletons they are!
So very brave to bluster,
While neither one could muster
Courage for genuine war."

So he stepped upon the scale,
Suave and dignified;
"Neighbors," he said with stately bow,
"I do not wish to chide,
But pray show common sense,
And in this difference
Let some third friend decide."



With a furious wish to scratch,
Cried selfish PUSSY GREY:
"I carried at the heaviest end,
Is all I have to say."
Then shook a violent paw
And threatened to go to law
If he couldn't have his way.

Both GREY and TOM knew well
They never could agree;
So both exclaimed with common breath:
"If you will umpire be
Your ruling we'll obey;
Go get your scales and weigh
And divide it equally."


Jocko to be the judge!
 The greatest rogue in town!
 But he gravely brought his balances
 And gravely set them down,
 And to make himself look wise
 Put glasses on his eyes,
 And wore a wig and gown.



He cut the cheese in twain,
 And a lovely slice was laid
 On either scale; but, lo, the right
 The other far outweighed.
 So Jocko from the right
 Demurely took a bite,
 Which quite a difference made,


For then the balance dipped
 To the left decidedly;
 So he took a mouthful out of that
 To right it — do you see?
 But the whole thing seemed perverse
 That made the matter worse,
 And he took bite number three.

Edmund H. Garrett
 1894




GREY turned to look at TOM!

TOM turned to stare at GREY!
So this was their boasted going to law,
And this was the lawyer's way!
At least for a minute's space
Into each other's face
They gazed in dumb dismay.



Then with despairing howl,
GREY smote his breast and cried:
"The Judge gives justice, but there'll be
No cheese left to divide!"
And TOM mused wildly: "Please
Give me the smallest piece,
I will be satisfied!"



JUDGE JOCKO found the cheese
A most delicious one,
So he nibbled, nibbled from either scale
And quite enjoyed the fun.
It made it doubly sweet
To have them watch him eat,
And to hear a frequent groan.



Samuel R. Gorton

Meanwhile he moralized :
" My friends, it is a fact,
Some rather than be generous
Prefer to be exact.
And when difficulties rise
It usually is wise
To have a lawyer act."

Now of their prize they could
But the veriest morsel see ;
" Give that to me," cried GREY.
Shrieked TOM, " Give that to me !"
" Nay, nay," said the JUDGE, " nay, nay,"
In his most judicial way,
" This is the lawyer's fee."

So home to his faded fire,
Hungry and sad, GREY went ;
And to the lonesome stars and the dark
TOM made his loud lament,
While Jocko, his wig and gown
Laid by, curled snugly down
In gratified content.



Edmund R. Garrett

THE LARKS AND THE FARMER

OH, where shall we hide it,
Where, oh, where?"

Cried a little fluttering
Bird of the air.

She had searched the marshes
And meadows over,
Thicket and hedgerow,
Sprouting wheat-field,
Grass and clover.

Her mate had left her
There in the dew,
For the very peak
Of Heaven's blue;

A tenor singer
He was, and sweet
Were the ariettas
He dropped from cloudland
Down at her feet.

"I will leave it all
To your woman's wit,
And will sing while you
Are deciding it,"
He said, and went soaring
Aloft, up — up!
Spilling his music
As water is spilled from
An o'er-full cup.

VERSIFIED
FROM ÆSOP'S
FABLES

By
MRS. CLARA
JOY BAILEY



Soon she discovered
The very best,
The cunningest, cosiest
Spot for a nest;
Right where the wheat grew
Green as could be,
In the wind glistening,
Tumbling and rolling,
Tossed like the sea.

There was the dear nest
Skillfully made;
Five little, freckled, green
Eggs in it laid;
Softly she hovered there,
Striving to tell
Just where the pretty things,
Pecking and rapping,
Would peep from the shell.

Long had the hours seemed
While she sat there,
Had it not been for
The song in the air;
Even by looking up
She could descry
That little feather speck
Sending down tunes to her
Out of the sky.

What was it stirred so
Under her wings? —
Higher her mate soars,
Louder he sings!
Five little birds hatched!
Each one a LARK!
Ah, when they fledge and fly,
How will all summer-tide
Listen and hark!



Rustled the wheat stalks,
Ripening slowly,
All round the cosy house
Hidden and lowly;
Grew fast the little flock,
Speckled of breast,
Gaping their hungry mouths,
Till over-running
Was the home nest.

Wagged every wheat-head,
 Yellow of beard ;
 Almost the harvest !—
 Watchful LARKS feared ;
 So when abroad they flew
 Searching for food,
 Worms, caterpillars,
 Midges or beetles,
 They warned their brood :


“ If any noise you hear,
 Hover each other !
 Any strange voices near,
 Call to your mother !
 For when the grain-fields
 Yellowing stand,
 Ripened for stack or thatch,
 Then do the reapers come
 Sickle in hand ! ”



One day a strange step
 Paused near their bed,
 And the old farmer-man
 Thoughtfully said :
 “ Aye, it is ripe enough !
 I will go find
 Some of my neighbor folk
 To help me cut it,
 Rake it, and bind.”

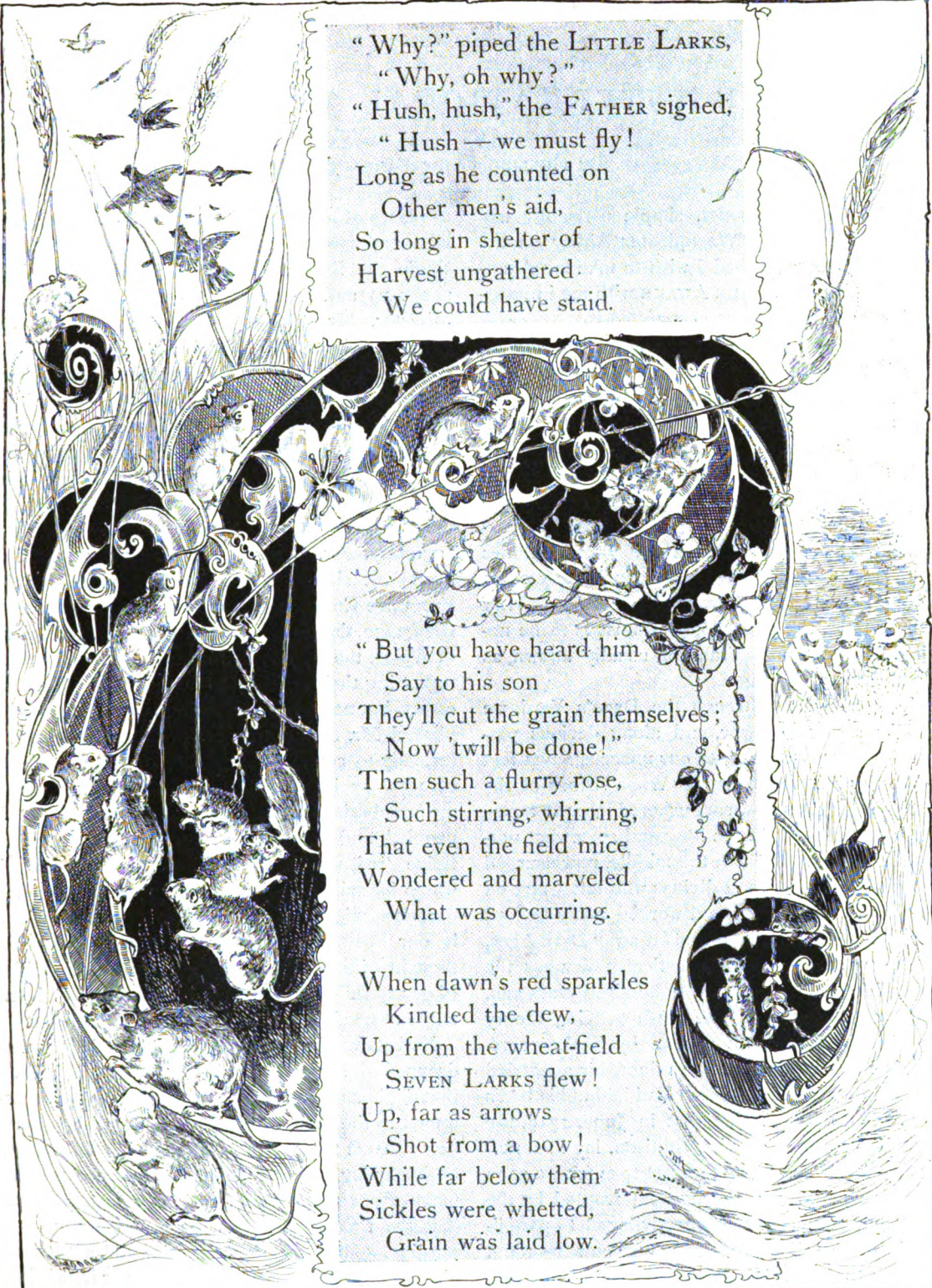
Wildly the nestlings' hearts
 Fluttered and beat ;
 Scarce had they breath the grim
 News to repeat ;
 Laughed the LARK MOTHER :
 “ Fie, do not worry !
 If he depends on friends
 Then take your ease, my dears,
 There is no hurry ! ”

So when, another day,
Farmer once more
Planned for the neighbors' help,
Just as before,
All the wise little ones
Smiled with disdain:
"There is no danger yet!
Here in our golden grove,
We can remain."



But the time came at last
When with dismay
PARENT LARKS heard the bluff
Old fellow say:
"We'll wait no longer
For others, my son,
But bright and early we'll
Go at the work ourselves —
Then 'twill be done!"

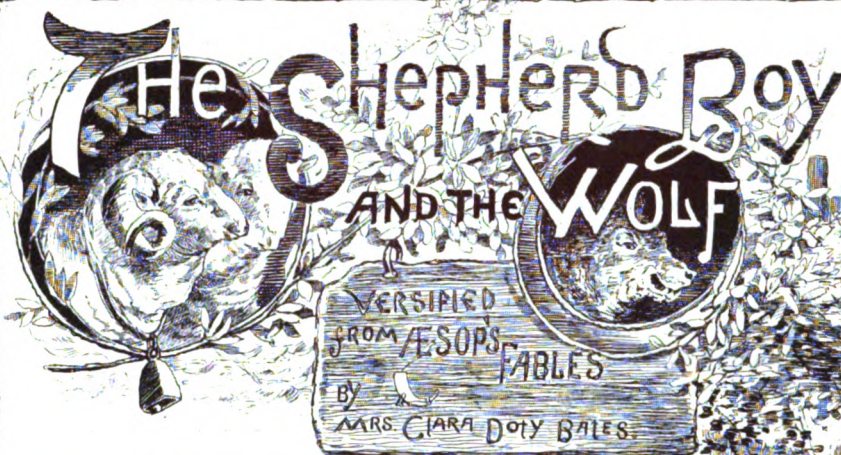
"Now then," the MOTHER cried,
"Pack up your things;
Try well your bills and feet;
Shake out your wings!
Soon as you spy the first
Glimmer of dawn,
Even though the heavy dew
Drabbles and drenches us,
We must be gone!"



"Why?" piped the LITTLE LARKS,
"Why, oh why?"
"Hush, hush," the FATHER sighed,
"Hush — we must fly!
Long as he counted on
Other men's aid,
So long in shelter of
Harvest ungathered.
We could have staid.

"But you have heard him
Say to his son
They'll cut the grain themselves;
Now 'twill be done!"
Then such a flurry rose,
Such stirring, whirring,
That even the field mice
Wondered and marveled
What was occurring.

When dawn's red sparkles
Kindled the dew,
Up from the wheat-field
SEVEN LARKS flew!
Up, far as arrows
Shot from a bow!
While far below them
Sickles were whetted,
Grain was laid low.



AN idle LAD, a loitering LAD,
 Was the only son the shepherd had.
 He knew the clearest sunny corner
 Of every village street,
 He liked as well as any other
 The curbstone for a seat,
 And he stood as if an iron anchor
 Were fastened to his feet.



The father said, and shook his head,
 "Ah me, he'll never earn his bread,
 Nor even the salt to salt his porridge,
 Though bread and salt were cheap!
 And how can I plan it any better
 Than to have him mind the sheep?"
 The meadows were sparse, the pasture stony,
 The hillside bleak and steep.

So day by day, half sour, half gay,
 He loafed the summer hours away;
 He watched the white flocks cropping, cropping,
 Or huddled in the shade,
 And heard, for voices, the drowsy jangle
 The one small sheep-bell made,
 With now and then the piteous bleating
 Of a lamb from its mother strayed.



Nothing to do the whole day through!
 No one to talk with that he knew!
 What wonder his mind was a field for folly?
 And that, like a wicked seed,
 It sprouted there, to grow and blossom
 Into a naughty deed?
 "Satan will find some mischief ever
 For idle hands," we read.



Down the hillside, as if terrified,
 One day he ran, and running cried:
 "WOLF! WOLF!" The simple folk of the village
 Came out with great concern,
 Left bench and desk and shop and counter
 The dreaded news to learn;
 Left needle and awl and nail and hammer;
 Left cradle, oven and churn.

From every door peered one or more,
 Till the roused ones numbered twice a score;
 "A WOLF?" they queried; and, armed with shovel,
 With sickle or hoe or spade,
 With broomstick, poker, tongs or ladle,
 With cleaver or saw or blade,
 They swarmed along to the threatened pasture,
 And a fine display they made.



They crowded, they ran; the miller-man
 Was white with flour and dusty with bran;
 The tailor had on his big brass thimble,
 But the chopper had no ax;
 The women left their humdrum treadles
 Where they were spinning flax,
 And joined the march, though forced to carry
 Their babies on their backs.





They reached the rocks; there were the flocks
 Grazing, with burrs in their woolly locks.
 But where was the WOLF so fierce and hairy,
 The WOLF so gaunt and spare,
 With white fangs glistening, and red tongue lolling,
 Ready his prey to tear?
 Not even so much as a dew-wet footprint
 Was visible anywhere.



Then wondering greatly, back sedately
 They turned to the work they'd left so lately.
 While the Boy—the worthless little rascal—
 Thinking of what he'd done,
 And left once more to his own devices,
 Laughed aloud at the fun,
 Till from his eyes, like the drips of a shower
 From the eaves, the water run.



"What need to be so dull?" cried he,
 "When simply one little word from me
 Can bring abroad these silly people,
 And give them such a chase?
 For an hour, at least, my stupid pasture
 Was quite a lively place!"
 And again the merry wrinkles puckered
 The muscles of his face.

No hurt nor blame from this frolic came,
 But the lagging days droned on the same;
 Ever a gray blank or a blue one
 The sky was overhead;
 Ever the sheep kept cropping, cropping,
 And yet were never fed;
 Ever he longed for the village gossip,
 But silence had instead.

Therefore to repeat his wolf-cry cheat
 He thought might serve as a jovial treat.
 And again through the street he sped and shouted,
 Just as he did before;
 And butcher and baker and candle-stick maker
 Ran zealously out once more;
 It seemed that dozens of women and children
 Issued from every door.

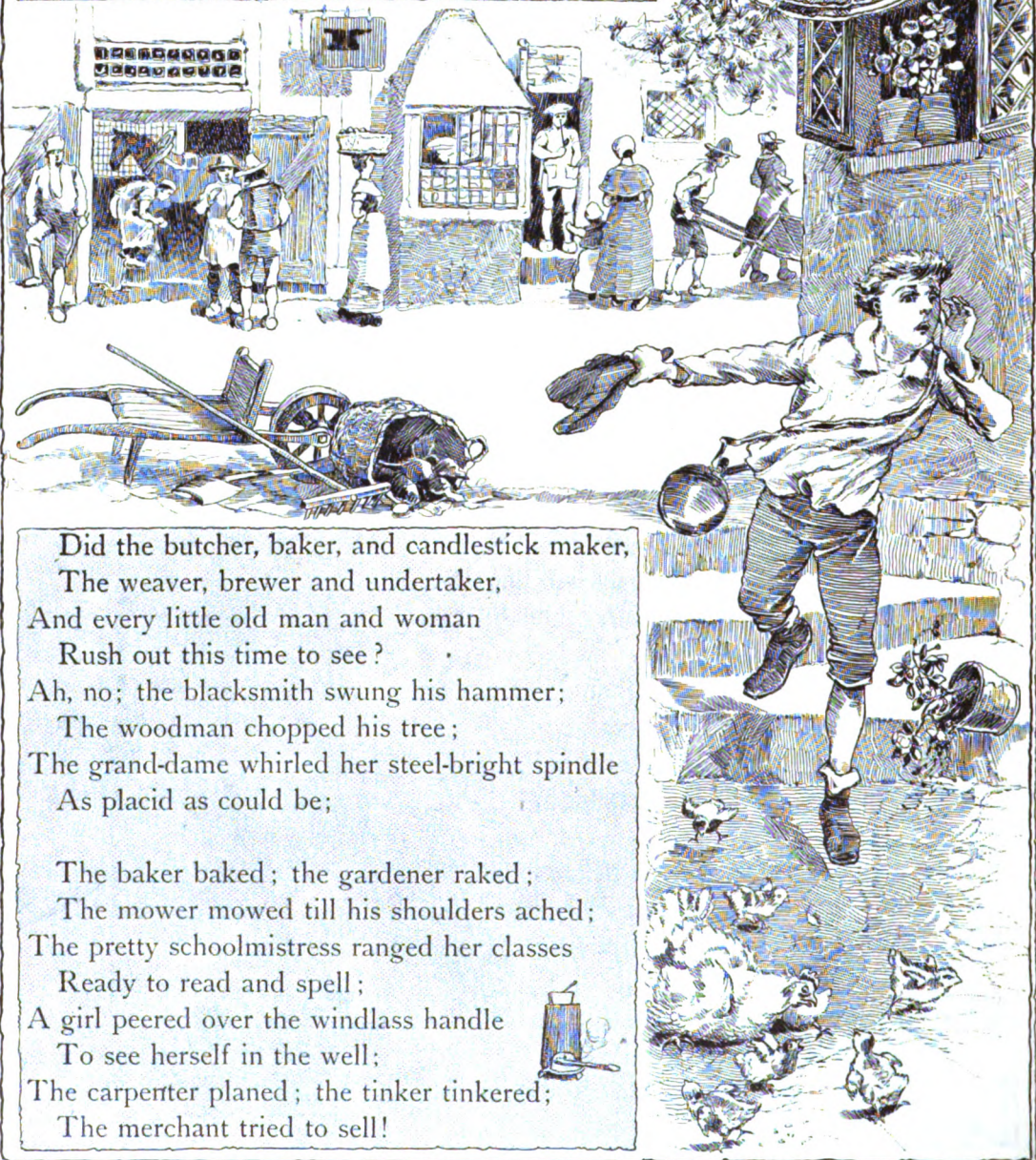


Did they find the foe of the flock? Ah, no!
 They saw through the two-fold humbug, though.
 And when to their workshops and their houses
 Returning, an angry crowd,
 With hands on their hastily-gathered weapons,
 Each one declared and vowed
 There never had been so base a swindle!
 While the LAD—he laughed aloud!

Now it chanced next day, as he sprawling lay,
 Whistling his vagrant breath away,
 A WOLF in truth, all gaunt and hairy,
 Came stealing from the wood;
 A grizzly-skinned and lean-ribbed giant
 It right before him stood,
 With white fangs glistening and red tongue lolling,
 And great eyes shot with blood.



Pell-mell he fled ; whether heels or head
 Were uppermost could scarce be said.
 " Help, help! WOLF! WOLF!" he cried, till Echo
 " Help, help! WOLF! WOLF!" replied.
 Over stock and stone he leaped, believing
 The lank beast at his side;
 The strength of his lungs increasing, trebled,
 " Help, help! WOLF! WOLF!" he cried.



Did the butcher, baker, and candlestick maker,
 The weaver, brewer and undertaker,
 And every little old man and woman
 Rush out this time to see ?

Ah, no; the blacksmith swung his hammer;
 The woodman chopped his tree;
 The grand-dame whirled her steel-bright spindle
 As placid as could be;

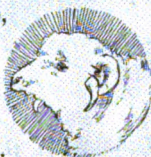
The baker baked ; the gardener raked ;
 The mower mowed till his shoulders ached ;
 The pretty schoolmistress ranged her classes
 Ready to read and spell ;

A girl peered over the windlass handle
 To see herself in the well ;
 The carpenter planed ; the tinker tinkered ;
 The merchant tried to sell!

Not the glance of an eye, nor word of reply,
 Was given the crier or the cry.
 "He's a mischief-maker, a good-for-nothing,"
 They silently agreed,
 "And that he is allowed to make such a clanior
 Is a burning shame, indeed."
 The wilder his terror, the more he shouted,
 The less they seemed to heed.

Too sad to tell, too cruel to tell,
 Is the fate that those poor sheep befell.
 Left thus by a false and foolish SHEPHERD
 To meet a foe so grim,
 He hunted them, scattered them, overtook them
 And rent them limb from limb!
 For a pack of his lean-ribbed, grizzly brothers
 Gave savage aid to him.

So the lazy LAD, the loitering LAD,
 The only son the shepherd had,
 Became a by-word in the village
 Of folly and distrust.
 Flocks lost, he could not earn his living;
 He was fed on the merest crust.
 "He cheated; he idled; we couldn't believe him,"
 His neighbors said: "'tis just!"



FOX and THE STORK

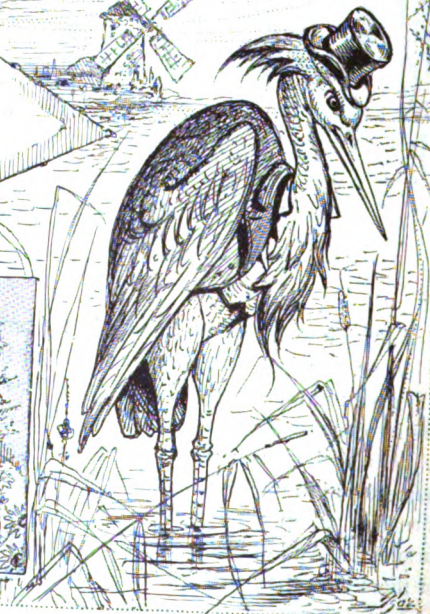
VERSIFIED FROM
ÆSOP'S FABLES
BY
MRS. LARA DOTY BATES




There was a Fox lived on the hill,
A LADY FOX
With reddish locks,
And there was a STORK lived by the mill;
And one was idle and fat and gay,
And knew how a cunning trick to play,
While the other was long and lean away.

Gay LADY FOX lived by her wit,
But her friend, the STORK,
Was forced to work,
And a tedious time he had of it;
For the little green frogs were quick to leap,
And the shoals of minnows swift to sweep
Out of the shallows into the deep.


The Fox on a high-perched, stately shelf
Close to her den,
Was, now and then,
Wont to lie down and sun herself.
Only the wind her habit knew,
And up to her slender muzzle blew
The scent of the grass-fields and the dew.






And up to her ears, so keen to hear,
On ready wing
Brought everything
Of news, and sounds from far and near —
The tree-toad's chirr, the ploughboy's strain,
The bay of the hound and his hindering chain,
While the hillside echo bayed again.

And there was much for her eyes to see,
From the hazy blue
Of mountains to
The nearer grace of rock and tree;
And by puddle, or pool, or rivulet,
One lone, gaunt figure always met
Her gaze, knee-deep in sedge and wet,




The STORK. She mused, that from the peep
Of dawn till noon,
And from noon till moon,
He was always standing there knee-deep.
So, once she sent a small gray Bee
With a message worded graciously:
"Dear friend, pray dine to day with me."



She made a soup. The breast of a wren,
A robin's egg,
A sparrow's leg,
And the whole of the little fat red hen,
She boiled together, with sprigs of rue,
With thyme and anise and onion too,
And salt — just a pinch of salt would do.

And, seasoned thus, in a skilful way
She stirred it well,
Till the STORK could smell
The steam from it half a mile away.
So, when the gray Bee buzzing near,
Droned her kind message in his ear,
His heart leapt glad and light to hear.

Out he stept from the mud and ooze,
With eager speed
Through rush and reed,
And away he stalked in his scarlet shoes.
That savory smell his footprints led ;
And there was the Fox's table spread ;
And the pot was boiling fast, she said.



Two large flat plates were on the board,
And, the stew completed,
They soon were seated,
And from a gourd-jadle the mess was poured
Then out of her wide and shallow pan
The Fox with little red tongue began
To lap, lap, lap, as fox's can.

But the STORK could only touch the tip
Of his long bill in;
The soup was thin,
And try as he would, he could only sip.
And while with a relish his hostess ate
Saucers full, platters full, plate on plate
He sat, half-starved, disconsolate.

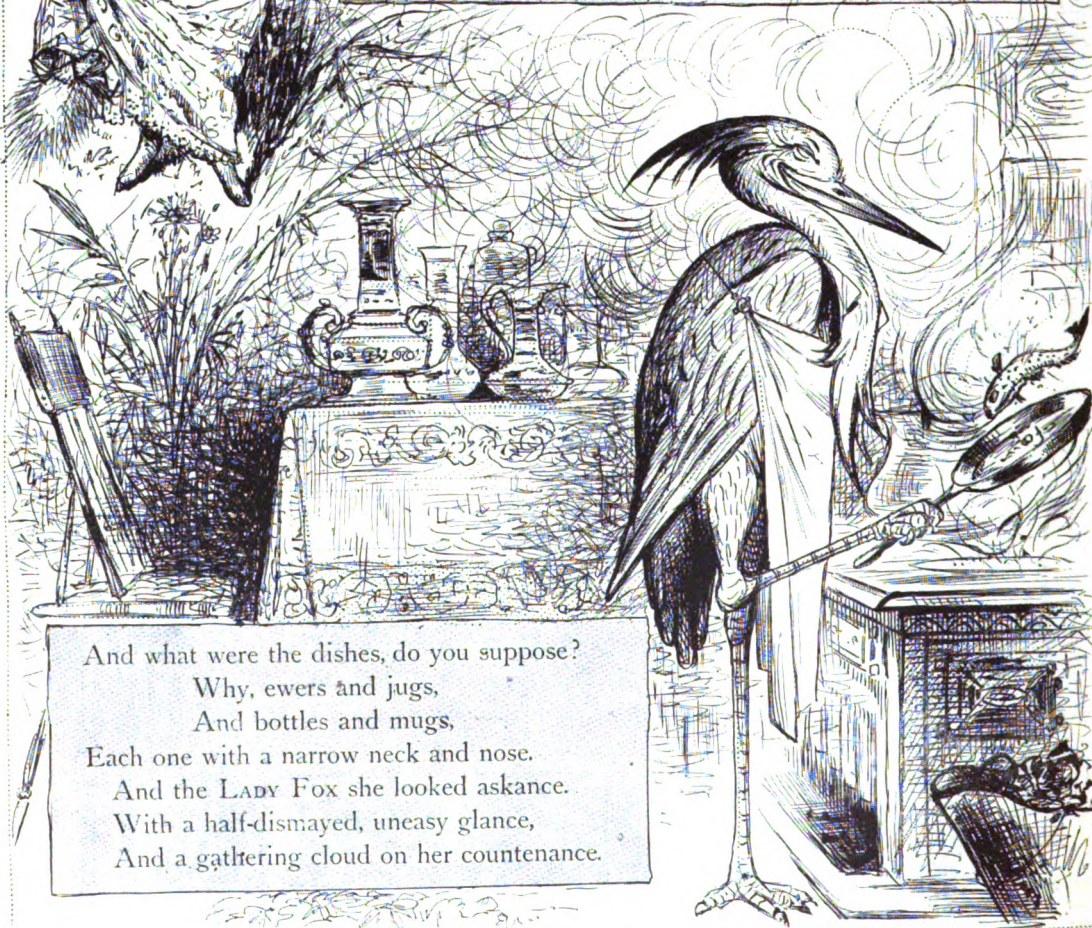
What a dinner it was, food drop by drop !
Just taste enough
Of the toothsome stuff
To make him linger and loath to stop.
And he bitterly sighed : " It may be a fit,
Fine way for a lady to show her wit,
But I'll be even with her for it."




And the time came soon; one day he sent
By a messenger
A note to her
Of flattering flourish and compliment:
"Come down to the fen from your lofty rocks,
And brighten my marsh with your sun-red locks,
And feast with me, dear LADY FOX."



Swift-footed adown the hill she crept,
A russet shadow
Along the meadow,
The grass scarce rustling where she stepped.
She found at the STORKS' the table out;
A chowder bubbled; a speckled trout
Hopped in the frying-pan about.



And what were the dishes, do you suppose?
Why, ewers and jugs,
And bottles and mugs,
Each one with a narrow neck and nose.
And the LADY FOX she looked askance,
With a half-dismayed, uneasy glance,
And a gathering cloud on her countenance.

A detailed illustration of a fox and a swan sitting at a table. The fox, on the left, is wearing a dark coat and a hat, looking towards the swan. The swan, on the right, is wearing a long, patterned dress and a tall, ornate hat, looking back at the fox. The table is set with various dishes, including a large pitcher, a glass, and a plate. The background shows a landscape with trees and a body of water.

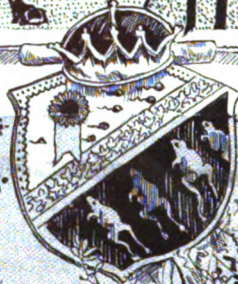
For how could a lady eat — dear me! —
From pitchers so tall,
With necks so small,
And the chowder so deep within, you see?
She could pick a bone, or rob a nest;
She would steal the bait from a trap with zest;
But here she was baffled, she confessed.

She sniffed in this jar, peered in that;
She smiled, she simpered,
She even whimpered,
But the STORK as grave as a deacon sat,
And ate, by thrusting his long bill
Way down to the pottage and pudding, until
He had eaten all — had had his fill.

Slow-footed the poor Fox homeward went,
A russet shadow
Along the meadow,
The weeds scarce rustling where she stepped.
And hungry she went to bed that night,
Muttering, "The STORK was not polite,
But he served me right — he served me right!"

THE FROGS WHO WISHED A KING

+VERSIFIED+ FROM +ÆSOP'S+
+FABLES+
BY MRS. CLARA DOLY BATES.



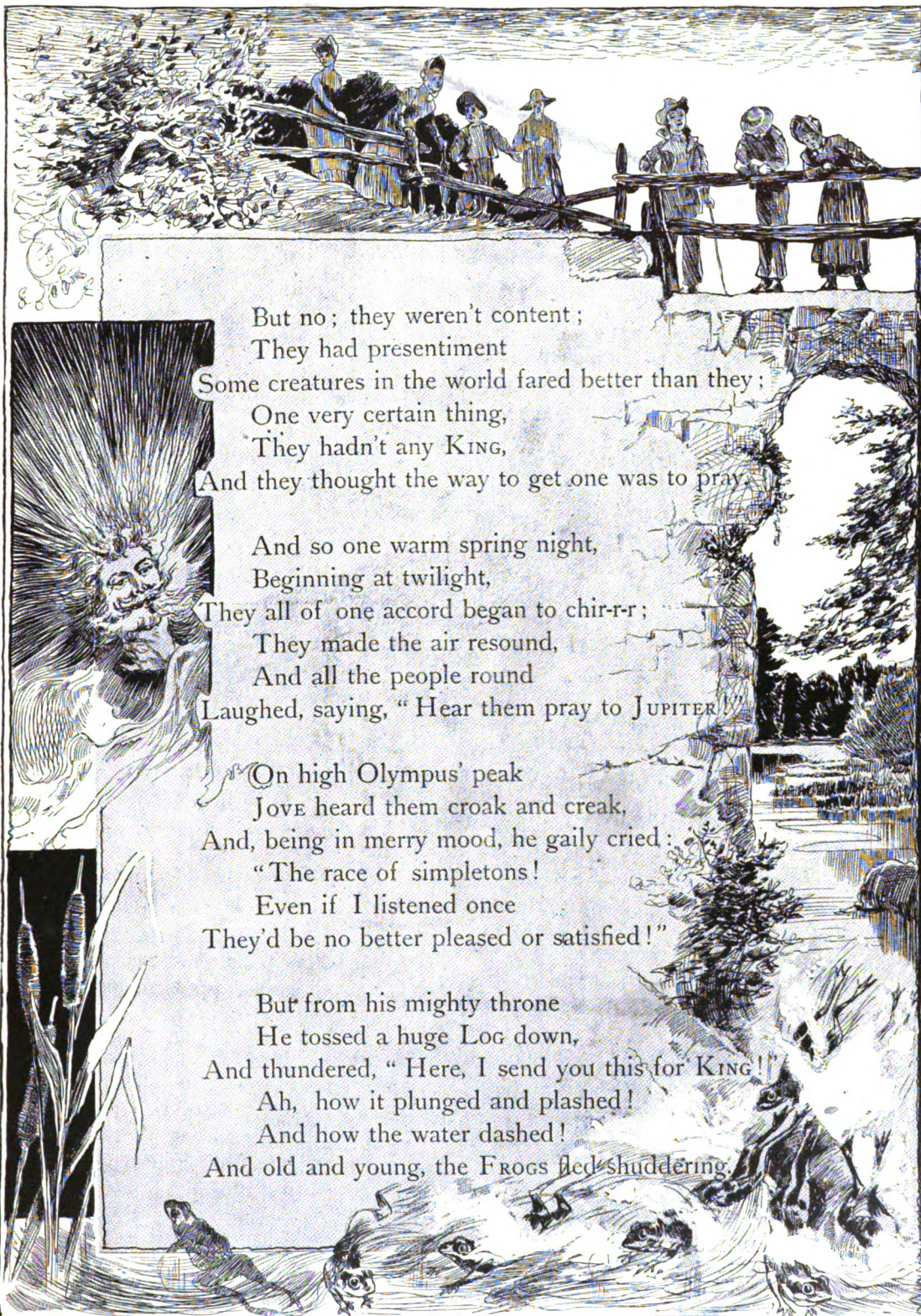
ONCE long, ah, long ago —
How long I do not know —
A nation of FROGS there was — a favored race
Who lived away from boys,
From thoroughfares and noise,
Behind a wood, in a most lovely place.

A sheltered, marshy pool
It was, and the water cool
Filled it, like a wide saucer, to the brim;
While willows on the bank
Bent gracefully and drank,
And rushes grew all round, a broad green rim.

What could they do but thrive?
There was room to hop and dive,
And room to swim all day, if so they chose;
Plenty of mossy bogs
Where the old rheumatic FROGS
Could sit and sun themselves and croak and doze.

The little FROGLETS had
Each his own lily pad
To sit on, and though slippery he could cling;
And at night the fire-flies
Held lanterns to their eyes
So they could read the notes they wished to sing.



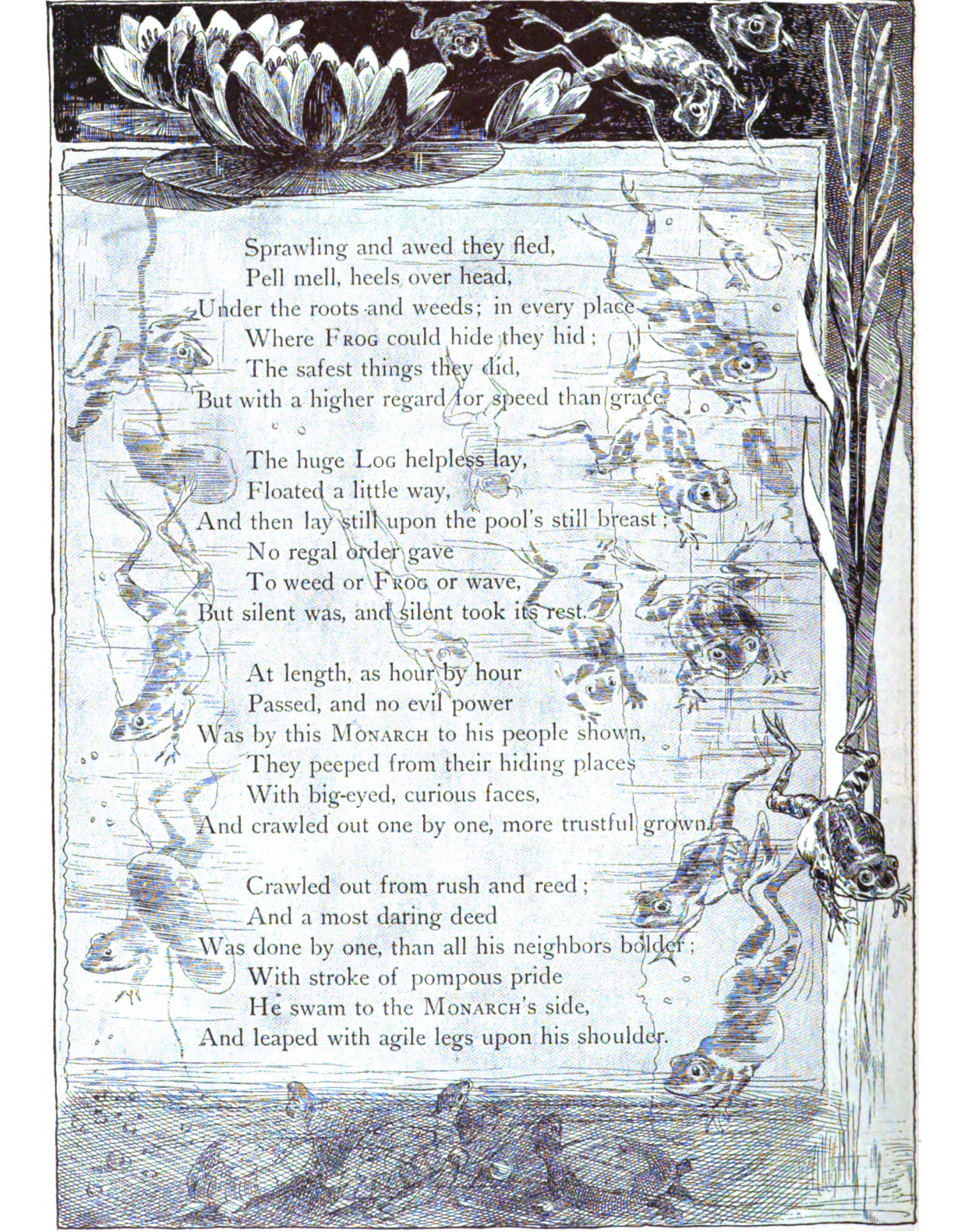


But no ; they weren't content ;
They had presentiment
Some creatures in the world fared better than they ;
One very certain thing,
They hadn't any KING,
And they thought the way to get one was to pray.

And so one warm spring night,
Beginning at twilight,
They all of one accord began to chir-r-r ;
They made the air resound,
And all the people round
Laughed, saying, " Hear them pray to JUPITER ! "

On high Olympus' peak
Jove heard them croak and creak,
And, being in merry mood, he gaily cried :
" The race of simpletons !
Even if I listened once
They'd be no better pleased or satisfied ! "

But from his mighty throne
He tossed a huge Log down,
And thundered, " Here, I send you this for KING ! "
Ah, how it plunged and plashed !
And how the water dashed !
And old and young, the Frogs fled shuddering.

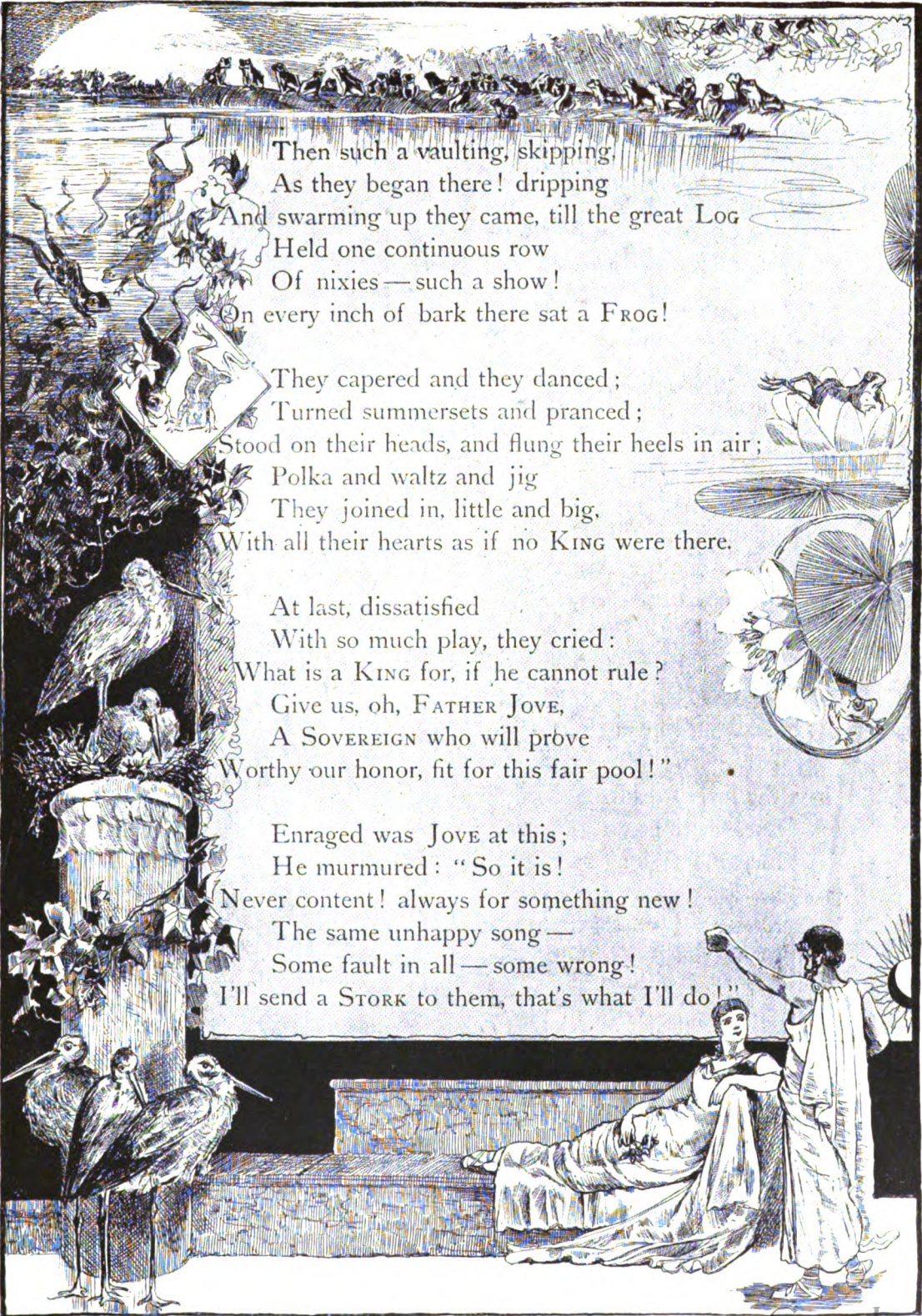


Sprawling and awed they fled,
Pell mell, heels over head,
Under the roots and weeds; in every place
Where FROG could hide they hid;
The safest things they did,
But with a higher regard for speed than grace.

The huge Log helpless lay,
Floated a little way,
And then lay still upon the pool's still breast;
No regal order gave
To weed or FROG or wave,
But silent was, and silent took its rest.

At length, as hour by hour
Passed, and no evil power
Was by this MONARCH to his people shown,
They peeped from their hiding places
With big-eyed, curious faces,
And crawled out one by one, more trustful grown.

Crawled out from rush and reed;
And a most daring deed
Was done by one, than all his neighbors bolder;
With stroke of pompous pride
He swam to the MONARCH's side,
And leaped with agile legs upon his shoulder.



Then such a vaulting, skipping,
As they began there! dripping
And swarming up they came, till the great Log
Held one continuous row
Of nixies — such a show!
On every inch of bark there sat a Frog!

They capered and they danced;
Turned summersets and pranced;
Stood on their heads, and flung their heels in air;
Polka and waltz and jig
They joined in, little and big,
With all their hearts as if no KING were there.

At last, dissatisfied
With so much play, they cried:
"What is a KING for, if he cannot rule?
Give us, oh, FATHER JOVE,
A SOVEREIGN who will prove
Worthy our honor, fit for this fair pool!"

Enraged was JOVE at this;
He murmured: "So it is!
Never content! always for something new!
The same unhappy song —
Some fault in all — some wrong!
I'll send a STORK to them, that's what I'll do!"

Forthwith from a far height
 A BIRD came into sight,
 White, borne upon its great wings easily,
 Like rainless summer cloud;
 And they beheld and bowed,
 And bent before him each a pliant knee.

His long neck, long red bill,
 And his legs longer still,
 Shod with red sandals, touched their frogly sense
 As beautiful beyond
 All else within the pond,
 A hero they with awe might reverence.

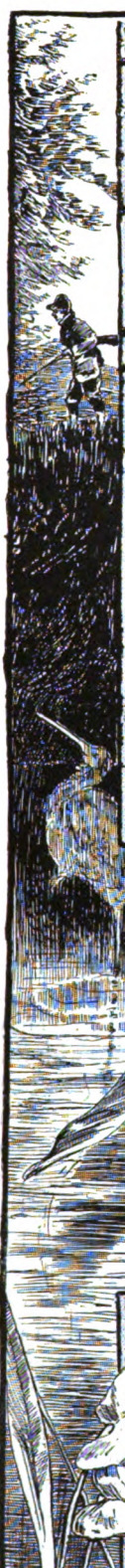
"Long live the KING!" he heard
 On all sides trilled and chirred.
 And what did he? He cast a sidelong eye
 Down at the nearest bog,
 Where a little fat green FROG
 Was quavering praises to him, shrill and high.

Ah, what did he, but pick
 It up in his bill so quick
 That the little freckled fellow never knew;
 Then, with a turn of his head,
 That bill so long and red
 Gobbled at one fell mouthful Number Two.



Not only two, but three
 Were swallowed instantly—
 His appetite was good, without a doubt;
 'Twas a sad road to take
 Down that long path of neck,
 For none who entered there ever came back.

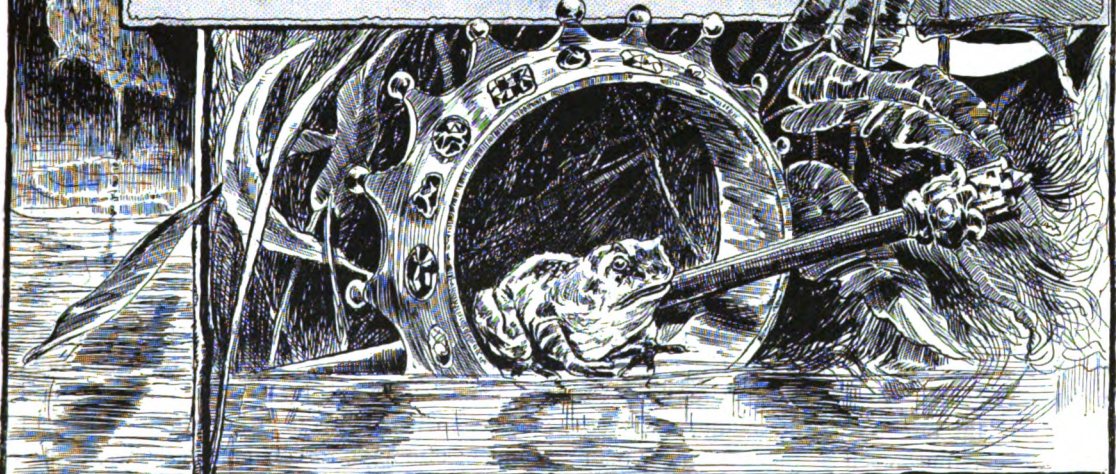




And so, from day to day
This RULER ate his way
Right through their ranks, big, middle-sized and small
Hop as they would, flee, spring,
This greedy, graceful KING
Could far out-walk, out-reach, out-eat them all.

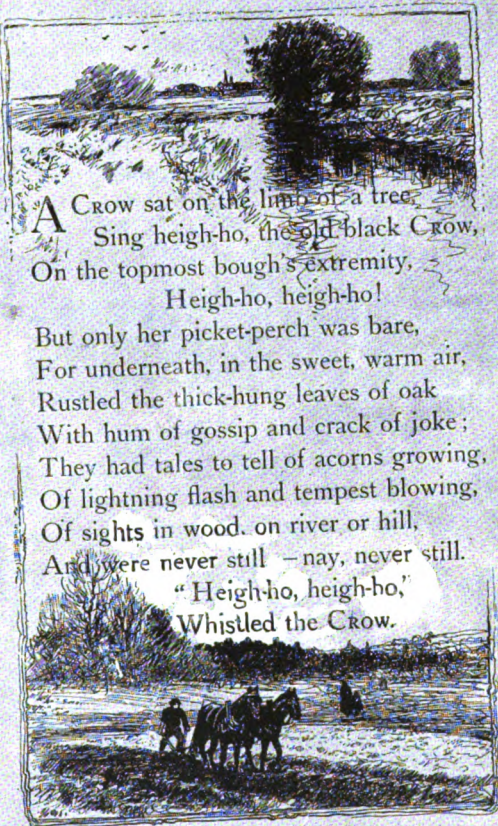
It must be manifest
That such a relish and zest
As this he showed for FROGS was a fearful thing;
So they in fright implored
The LOG might be restored,
Or even they'd gladly do without a KING.

"Ah, friends!" groaned one old chief,
"How have we come to grief!
One simple humble truth we should have known:
'Tis best to leave the state
Of greatness to the great;
And, well-to-do, let well enough alone!"



This was long, long ago —
How long I do not know.
"And did the STORK eat all the FROGS?" you say.
Perhaps — unless some one
Chanced that way with a gun,
And scared his hungry MAJESTY away.

The CROW AND THE FOX



A CROW sat on the limb of a tree,
Sing heigh-ho, the old black Crow,
On the topmost bough's extremity,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!

But only her picket-perch was bare,
For underneath, in the sweet, warm air,
Rustled the thick-hung leaves of oak
With hum of gossip and crack of joke;
They had tales to tell of acorns growing,
Of lightning flash and tempest blowing,
Of sights in wood, on river or hill,
And were never still — nay, never still.

"Heigh-ho, heigh-ho,"
Whistled the Crow.

Verseified
from
Tropes
Fables
by
Mrs. Clara Doty
Bates

Illustrated by
Edmund H. Garrett

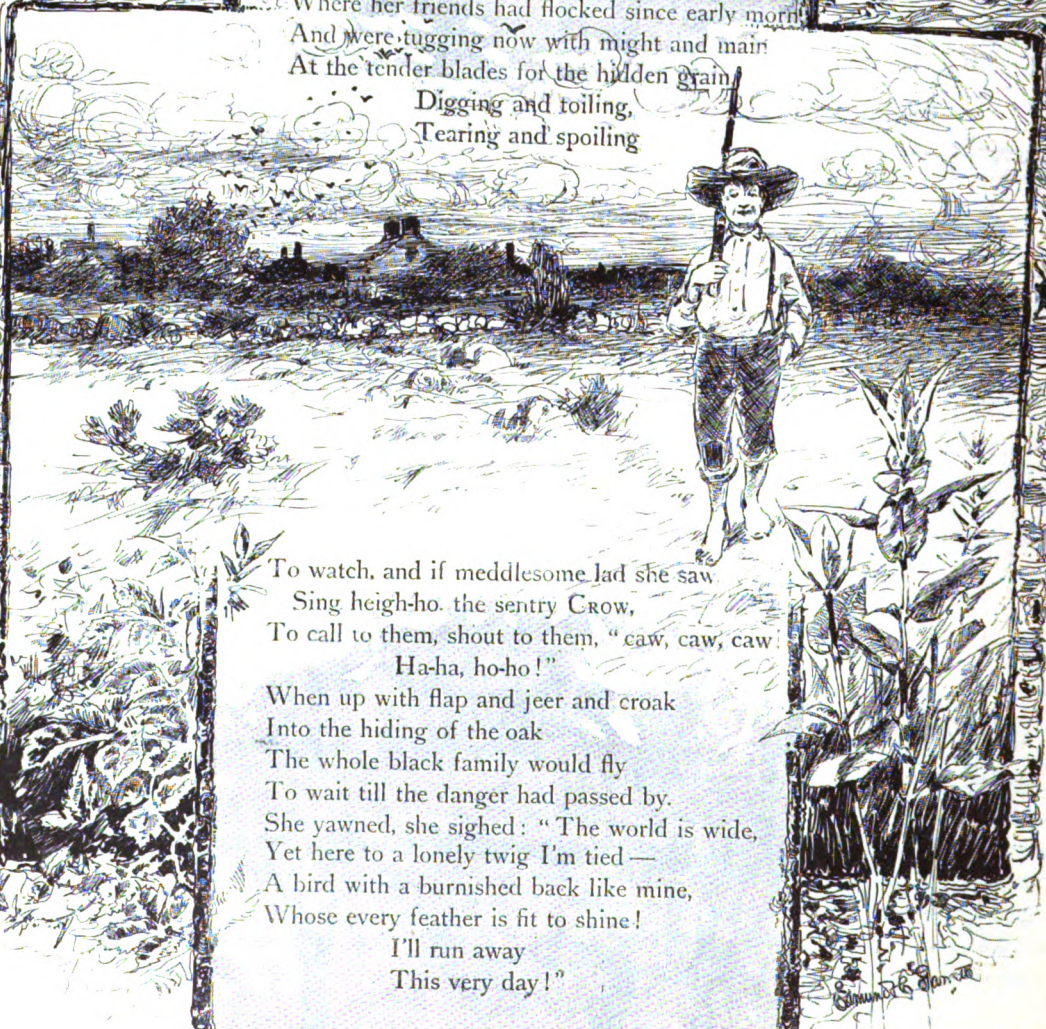
She was tired of hearing all day long,
Sing heigh-ho, the jealous CROW,
The blue-birds' twitter, or the robin's song.

Sing heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
She had nothing to do but sit and gaze
On either side through the air's blue haze;
To watch that no butternut-colored lout,
Strolling the farmer's fields about,
Should chance too near that patch of corn,
Where her friends had flocked since early morn,
And were tugging now with might and main
At the tender blades for the hidden grain.
Digging and toiling,
Tearing and spoiling

To watch, and if meddlesome lad she saw
Sing heigh-ho, the sentry CROW,
To call to them, shout to them, "caw, caw, caw!"
Ha-ha, ho-ho!"

When up with flap and jeer and croak
Into the hiding of the oak
The whole black family would fly
To wait till the danger had passed by.
She yawned, she sighed: "The world is wide,
Yet here to a lonely twig I'm tied —
A bird with a burnished back like mine,
Whose every feather is fit to shine!

I'll run away
This very day!"





No matter how nor where, she thought,
Sing heigh-ho, the vagrant Crow,
Only to leave that lonely spot,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!

To skim like a swallow after a fly;
To swim, as a hawk swims, slow and high,
To bubble a song like a bobolink;
To hop in a hedge like a chewink;
To hide a nest in a sweet-briar bush,
As the thrush hides hers, the shy, brown thrush;
To be a—what? She did not know,
But anything except a Crow!

And anywhere—
To live, but there!


Like leaden plummet into the sea,
Sing heigh-ho, the wayward Crow,
Down she dropped from the sentinel tree,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!

And away she sailed, unhindered, alone,
Like a dried leaf hither and thither blown;
Nor stopped, nor staid to rest, until
She ached with flying in every quill.

When, seeing the smoke from a cotter's fire
Pierce the blue air with its bluer spire,
She circled toward it, half aloof,
And settled at last on the dairy-roof.

"Indeed," she cried,
"The world is wide!"






Borne about her upon the breeze,
Sing heigh-ho, the hungry Crow,
Was a savory smell — the smell of cheese,
Cream-cheese, heigh-ho!


The door was ajar a tiny crack,
She crowded against it, pushed it back,
And crept inside the cool dark room
That was scoured with sand and scrubbed with broom.
There were rows of cheeses, and on a shelf
One cut; and she said, "I'll help myself!"
('Twas a way she had — to take for granted
She'd a right to everything she wanted.)
So she took of the cheese
A great fine piece.

How she escaped she scarcely knew,
Sing heigh-ho, the thieving Crow,
But away to a neighboring bough she flew,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!

A Fox from the wood saw everything,
How heavy her flight was, slow her wing,
And he caught a whiff even where he stood
Of the stolen goody and thought it good.
So with careless air he sauntered out,
Humming a light strain, gazing about,
Trotting along as if no cunning
Wily purpose were in his running,
While the Crow from her limb
Looked down at him.




Edmund Selous



"What stranger is this?" he suddenly cried,
Sing heigh-ho, the beautiful Crow,
"Such eyes, such feathers, such beak!" he sighed,
"Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!"

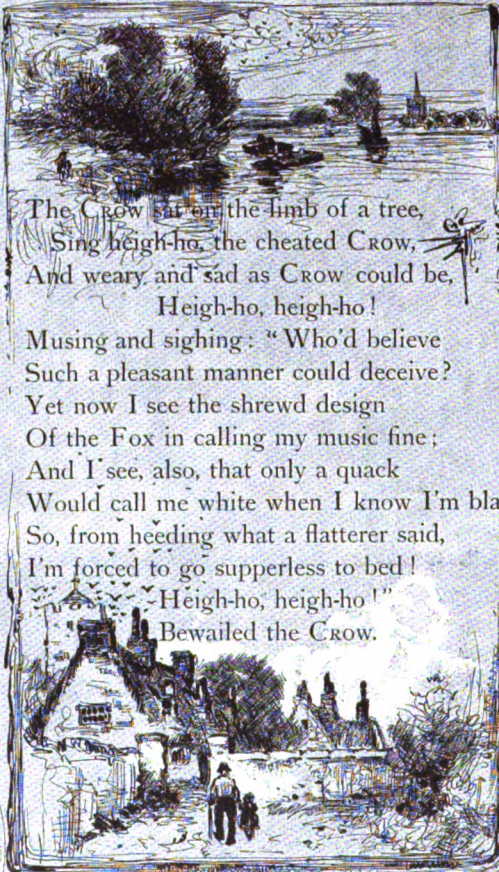
Good morning, lady! I saw from far
What a lovely Queen of the Wood you are,
And hastened near at my swiftest pace
The closer to scan your glorious face.
Such snowy plumage! such gloss of wing!
And, charming creature, no doubt you sing?
Ah, how would my eager ear rejoice
Could it hear the warble of your voice
But one sweet note
From that tuneful throat!"

The Crow's heart fluttered as she heard
Sing heigh-ho, the poor vain Crow,
She believed in her heart each honeyed word,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!
And she stretched her mouth from ear to ear,
That the longing, waiting Fox might hear,
And sang, "Caw, caw, caw!" harsh and hoarse,
And in singing dropped the cheese, of course
The Fox, who had laid his plan so well,
Was ready to catch it as it fell,
And, without so much as a "thank you," fled
With his booty, although he laughed and said,
"All this, you see,
For flattery!"



The Crow sat on the limb of a tree,
Sing heigh-ho, the cheated Crow,
And weary and sad as Crow could be,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!

Musing and sighing: "Who'd believe
Such a pleasant manner could deceive?
Yet now I see the shrewd design
Of the Fox in calling my music fine;
And I see, also, that only a quack
Would call me white when I know I'm black!
So, from heeding what a flatterer said,
I'm forced to go supperless to bed!
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho!"
Bewailed the Crow.



Edmund C. Sturge